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INCOMING TELEGRAM

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Control: 222
Rec'd: August 1, 1950 10:35 a.m.

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FROM: Brussels

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 167, August 1

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

PRIORITY.

SENT DEPARTMENT PRIORITY 167, REPEATED INFO PARIS 48, LONDON 34.

At 7:10 a.m. today Leopold signed agreement with government whereby he asked that a law be voted permitting him to transmit his prerogatives to Baudouin and that if the national parties rally to Baudouin he would become king on his twenty-first birthday (September 7, 1951).

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Translation of text follows:

"The Palace of Laken and the Cabinet of the Prime Minister communicate the following:

"The King, having received the representatives of the three traditional parties who informed him that they hoped that it would be possible to put an end to the crisis through which the country is passing in a manner which would respect the monarchy and dynasty and with the primary concern of assuring the union of Belgian citizens, the King replied:

'Throughout the Royal crisis in Belgium I have always believed that the first measure to be taken was to reestablish constitutional order.

"That is accomplished today.

"I have always thought that my duty was to respond to the wish of seeing me take up again my constitutional prerogatives which was expressed by the Chambers in joint session. That is what I did on July 22 last. On April 15, 1950 in my message to the nation I recalled that I conceived that my role as Chief of State could only be exercised outside of and above the parties in a manner which would permit me to fullfil the role of an arbiter in moments of crisis taking into account only the highest interests of the country. 'Since my return to Belgium I have ascertained with painful regret that the passions which divided the Belgians on the subject of my person instead of diminishing have become aggravated and have threatened to

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-2-167, August 1, from Brussels.

threatened to cause the country to undergo serious damage at a moment when the international situation requires more than ever a strengthening of the cohesion of the country. 'I have under these circumstances decided to ask the Government and the Parliament to vote as I had suggested in my message of the month of April, a law assuring the transmission of my powers to my son Prince Baudouin. This transmission of Royal powers to the Prince Baudouin appears to me to be the necessary stage towards the solution which should permit the accession of the hereditary Prince to the Throne when he has reached his civil majority if, as I hope and desire, the promised reconciliation around my son takes place.

'I take this grave decision after having received the assurances of persons (personnalites) who are in a position to make such assurances that the three national parties will bring to my son the most loyal political support and that they will do everything to realize the union of Belgians around him. I hope that at the moment when a solution of appeasement takes place after the grave difficulties which have recently occurred, that the important social, cultural and regional problems which face the country will soon be solved by the normal means of our democratic regime.

'To all Belgians I make a strong appeal for union, especially to those who for years have always shown me their touching fidelity. May all bring to my son their loyal support and aid him in the heavy task which will be placed on his young shoulders'".

Original by pouch.

MURPHY

MRM:MSF

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